

## Elite Opponents

**Kobolds**

By Andy Collins



This column aims to provide DMs with interesting opponents to pit against the PCs in their campaigns. Building off of a simple base -- typically a standard monster from the *Monster Manual* -- each column uses the building blocks provided in the rulebooks to craft a variety of foes. Through the addition of class levels or templates, or even via simple HD advancement, the creatures presented in this column are transformed from run-of-the-mill opponents into memorable foes. Check out this column every month for formidable enemies built from a different monster!

## The Kobold: More Than It Seems

This month, our base creature is the kobold. From the earliest days when brave adventurers entered dungeons in search of dragons to slay, the kobold has been regarded as the lowest of the low, the weakest of the weak, and the butt of every fantasy joke. But a closer look at these small reptilian humanoids reveals a different truth. Sure, they're physically weak, but that just means they don't make good fighters (at least in the traditional sense). Yes, their sensitivity to light renders them less capable in daylight combat, but cunning kobolds try to avoid such situations, thus rendering that weakness moot.

On the other hand, a kobold moves as fast as a Medium character, and its size, Dexterity, and innate natural armor grant it a higher-than-average AC. With a crossbow in hand, the kobold can happily ignore its Strength penalty while making exceptionally accurate ranged attacks. And rare is the kobold that simply attacks its foes outright. The ambush is its preferred combat tactic -- preferably one based around a nasty trap it has constructed for just such an occasion. With the addition of levels in a class that can take advantage of these benefits (such as rogue, ranger, or even monk), the lowly kobold suddenly becomes a very deadly opponent.



The three kobolds presented in this column offer three different approaches to creating challenging kobold opponents for your PCs. Their Challenge Ratings (4, 7, and 11) prove them appropriate opponents even at levels when most characters have long since stopped encountering kobolds. The challenge ratings can be adjusted up or down by adding or subtracting class levels, applying additional templates, and so forth.

According to the kobold entry in the *Monster Manual*, a kobold with levels in an NPC class has a CR equal to its character level minus 3. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that a kobold with standard (non-NPC) class levels has a CR equal to its character level minus 2. However, each kobold featured in this article has

above-average ability scores (usually the elite array given in the *Monster Manual*), and thus has a CR equal to its character level minus 1 (plus adjustment for its template, if any).

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## Hupo the Human-Slayer: Kobold Rogue

More than anything, Hupo desires respect, but he can't seem to get as much as he thinks he deserves. Even taking the nickname "Human-Slayer" hasn't done the trick. Maybe it's time to make a daring midnight raid into the local human village and bring back some heads or -- better yet -- some tasty human babies.

Hupo makes a good foe for low-level PCs, though he poses little threat unless he can make optimum use of his talents for stealth. He prefers to snipe from the safety of darkness, firing a single shot with his crossbow and then retreating, only to come back later for a potentially deadly sneak attack. He avoids a fair fight at all costs.

**Hupo:** Male kobold rogue 5; CR 4; Small humanoid (reptilian); HD 5d6+5; hp 22; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 20, touch 15, flat-footed 20; Base Atk +3; Grp -2; Atk +8 melee (1d4-1/19-20, short sword) or +9 ranged (1d6/19-20, masterwork light crossbow); Full Atk +8 melee (1d4-1/19-20, short sword) or +9 ranged (1d6/19-20, masterwork light crossbow); SA sneak attack +3d6; SQ darkvision 60 ft., evasion, light sensitivity, trap sense +2, trapfinding, uncanny dodge; AL LE; SV Fort +2, Ref +8, Will +2; Str 8, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Balance +6, Craft (trapmaking) +10, Disable Device +8, Hide +16, Jump +1, Listen +11, Move Silently +17, Search +10, Spot +11, Tumble +12; Alertness, Weapon Finesse.

**Evasion (Ex):** If exposed to any effect that normally allows a character to attempt a Reflex saving throw for half damage, Hupo takes no damage with a successful saving throw.

**Light Sensitivity (Ex):** Hupo is dazzled in bright sunlight or within the radius of a *daylight* spell.

**Trap Sense (Ex):** Hupo gains a +2 bonus on Reflex saves made to avoid traps and a +2 bonus to AC against attacks made by traps.

**Trapfinding:** Hupo can use the Search skill to locate traps when the task has a DC higher than 20.

**Uncanny Dodge (Ex):** Hupo can react to danger before his senses would normally allow him to even be aware of it. He retains his Dexterity bonus to AC (if any) regardless of being caught flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker. (He still loses any Dexterity bonus to AC if immobilized.)

**Possessions:** +1 studded leather, short sword, masterwork light crossbow, 10 bolts, *potion of invisibility*, *boots of elvenkind*.

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## Mokodo: Half-Kobold/Half-Green Dragon

Thanks to her draconic heritage, Mokodo displays little of the cowardice common to most other kobolds. Spawn of a union between the tribe's leader and a green dragon, Mokodo has excelled in both martial combat and sorcerous power. Having heard many tales of eldritch knights, Mokodo has left her tribe to pursue a similar path.

Mokodo makes a good opponent for mid-level characters. Though typically a loner, she occasionally falls in with other groups of kobolds, serving as a potent ally or even a short-term leader. Mokodo has no fear of throwing herself into melee with a larger opponent, but she isn't stupid and avoids foolish fights. If she is losing, she doesn't hesitate to withdraw so that she can fight another day.

**Mokodo:** Female half-kobold/half-green dragon fighter 1/sorcerer 4; CR 7; Small dragon (reptilian); HD 1d10+1 plus 4d4+4; hp 20; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +3; Grp +3; Atk +8 melee (1d3+4, claw) or +10 melee (1d10+7/17-20, +1 *keen greatsword*); Full Atk +8 melee (1d3+4, 2 claws) and +3 melee (1d4+2, bite) or +10 melee (1d10+7/17-20, +1 *keen greatsword*); SA breath weapon (30-ft. cone of corrosive gas); SQ darkvision 60 ft., familiar benefits, immunities (acid, paralysis, sleep), light sensitivity, low-light vision, weasel familiar; AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 19, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 17.

**Skills and Feats:** Climb +8, Concentration +5, Craft (trapmaking) +2, Hide +6, Jump +8, Listen +2, Search +2, Spellcraft +4, Spot +2; Alertness, Dodge, Mobility, Weapon Focus (greatsword).

**Breath Weapon (Su):** Once per day, Mokodo can breathe a 30-foot cone of corrosive gas. Each creature in the area takes 6d8 points of acid damage (Reflex DC 11 half).

**Familiar Benefits:** Mokodo's familiar grants her the benefits of the Alertness feat when he is within 5 feet of her. He also grants her the following benefits.

**Empathic Link (Su):** Mokodo can communicate telepathically with her familiar at a distance of up to 1 mile. She has the same connection to an item or a place that her familiar does.

**Share Spells:** Mokodo may have any spell she casts on herself also affect her familiar if the latter is within 5 feet at the time of casting. Mokodo may also cast a spell with a target of "You" on her familiar.

**Touch:** The familiar can deliver touch spells for Mokodo.

**Light Sensitivity (Ex):** Mokodo is dazzled in bright sunlight or within the radius of a *daylight* spell.

**Sorcerer Spells Known** (6/7/4; save DC 13 + spell level): 0 -- *acid splash*, *daze*, *detect magic*, *mage hand*, *read magic*, *touch of fatigue*; 1st -- *expeditious retreat*, *mage armor*, *ray of enfeeblement*; 2nd -- *bull's strength*.

**Possessions:** +1 *keen greatsword*, *potion of bear's endurance*, *potion of cure moderate wounds*, gold bracelet (450 gp).

**Mokodo's Familiar:** Male weasel familiar; CR --; Tiny animal; HD 1/2 d8 (effective 5d8); hp 10; Init +2; Spd 20 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 16, touch 14, flat-footed 14; Base Atk +3; Grp -9; Atk +7 melee (1d3-4, bite); Full Atk +7 melee (1d3-4, bite); Space/Reach 2-1/2 ft./0 ft.; SA attach; SQ improved evasion, low-light vision, scent;

AL LE; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +5; Str 3, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 5.

*Skills and Feats:* Balance +10, Climb +14, Concentration +4, Hide +10, Jump +0, Move Silently +8, Spot +3; Weapon Finesse.

**Attach (Ex):** If Mokodo's familiar hits with a bite attack, he latches onto the opponent's body and automatically deals bite damage each round he remains attached. He loses his Dexterity bonus to Armor Class and has an AC of 14. While attached, he can be struck with a weapon or grappled. To remove him through grappling, the opponent must achieve a pin against him.

**Improved Evasion (Ex):** When subjected to an attack that normally allows a Reflex saving throw for half damage, Mokodo's familiar takes no damage if he makes a successful saving throw and half damage even if the saving throw fails.

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## Lidae: Kobold Dire Wereweasel

Perhaps the greatest achievement of kobold society was the semi-domestication of dire weasels to serve as guards for the tribe and hunters for warbands. The association between the two kinds of creatures lasted for so long that at some point, a sympathetic connection was created, resulting in the first kobold dire wereweasels. Even today, one kobold in ten thousand displays this heritage as a natural lycanthrope.

Lidae is one of those rare creatures. Though she was once the most respected hunter of her tribe, a failed coup attempt against the tribe's leader made her an outcast. Now she hunts any prey that catches her fancy, though she still prefers her favored enemies -- dwarves and fey. (You may, of course, feel free to swap these for different favored enemies in your campaign.)

Because of her class levels and lycanthropic abilities, Lidae makes a good opponent for mid- or even high-level PCs. Her death attack doesn't have a lot of punch, so she uses it only against foes that are likely to have poor Fortitude saves (such as arcane spellcasters). She prefers to paralyze lone opponents so that she can infect them with lycanthropy, seeing that as the ultimate form of tribute to her kind.

Lidae fights best in hybrid or animal form. Her bracers, amulet, cloak, and gloves remain in place when she changes form, and she carries her other equipment on a flexible bandoleer that is specially designed to stay on even as her shape and size change.

**Lidae (Human Form):** Female kobold dire wereweasel ranger 5/assassin 3; CR 11; Small humanoid (reptilian, shapechanger); HD 3d8+3 plus 5d8+5 plus 3d6+3; hp 57; Init +9; Spd 30 ft.; AC 21, touch 16, flat-footed 16; Base Atk +9; Grp +5; Atk +16 melee (1d3+2/19-20, +2 *dagger*) or +16 ranged (1d3+2/19-20, +2 *dagger*); Full Atk +16/+11 melee (1d3+2/19-20, +2 *dagger*) and +16 melee (1d3+2/19-20, +2 *dagger*) or +16 ranged (1d3+2/19-20, +2 *dagger*) and +16 ranged (1d3+2/19-20, +2 *dagger*); SA death attack, sneak attack +2d6; SQ +1 save against poison, alternate form, animal companion (Medium viper), darkvision 60 ft., favored enemies (dwarves +4, fey +2), light sensitivity, low-light vision, poison use, scent, uncanny dodge, weasel empathy, wild empathy +5; AL CE; SV Fort +11, Ref +17, Will +9; Str 11, Dex 20, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +9, Craft (trapmaking) +2, Disguise +6, Hide +23, Listen +9, Move Silently +19,

Search +2, Spot +9, Survival +8; Alertness, Endurance, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Stealthy, Track, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (dagger).

**Death Attack:** After studying her target for 3 rounds, Lidae can either kill it or paralyze it for 1d6+3 rounds with a successful melee sneak attack (Fort DC 13 negates).

**Alternate Form (Su):** Lidae can assume the form of a kobold, a dire weasel, or a hybrid of the two.

**Animal Companion:** Lidae has a Medium viper as her animal companion. This creature grants her the following benefits.

*Link (Ex):* Lidae can handle her animal companion as a free action or push it as a move action, even if she doesn't have any ranks in the Handle Animal skill. She gains a +4 circumstance bonus on all wild empathy checks and Handle Animal checks made regarding her animal companion.

*Share Spells (Ex):* Lidae may have any spell she casts on herself also affect her animal companion if the latter is within 5 feet at the time of casting. She may also cast a spell with a target of "You" on her companion.

**Favored Enemies:** Lidae has selected dwarves and fey as favored enemies. She gains a +4 and a +2 bonus, respectively, on her Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, and Survival checks when using these skills against these types of creatures. She gets the same bonus on weapon damage rolls against creatures of these types.

**Light Sensitivity (Ex):** Lidae is dazzled in bright sunlight or within the radius of a *daylight* spell.

**Poison Use:** Lidae is trained in the use of poisons and never risks accidentally poisoning herself when applying poison to a blade.

**Uncanny Dodge (Ex):** Lidae can react to danger before her senses would normally allow her to even be aware of it. She retains her Dexterity bonus to AC (if any) regardless of being caught flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker. (She still loses any Dexterity bonus to AC if immobilized.)

**Weasel Empathy (Ex):** Lidae gains a +4 racial bonus on checks made to influence the attitude of weasels or dire weasels. She can also communicate simple concepts and (if the animal is friendly) commands.

**Wild Empathy (Ex):** Lidae can use body language, vocalizations, and demeanor to improve the attitude of an animal. This ability functions just like a Diplomacy check to improve the attitude of a person. Her bonus on the check is +5. The typical domestic animal has a starting attitude of indifferent, while wild animals are usually unfriendly. Lidae and the animal must study each other for 1 minute. This ability can also be used to influence a magical beast with an Intelligence score of 1 or 2, but Lidae takes a -4 penalty on the check.

**Assassin Spells Known** (2; save DC 10 + spell level): 1st -- *disguise self*, *jump*, *true strike*; 2nd -- none (insufficient Int score to know 2nd-level spells).

**Possessions:** 3 +2 *daggers*, *bracers of armor* +2, *amulet of mighty fists* +1, *gloves of Dexterity* +2, *cloak of resistance* +2, 2 *potions of cure serious wounds*.

**Lidae (Dire Weasel Form):** Female kobold dire wereweasel ranger 5/assassin 3; CR 11; Medium humanoid (reptilian, shapechanger); HD 3d8+3 plus 5d8+5 plus 3d6+3; hp 57; Init +13; Spd 30 ft.; AC 26, touch 19, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +9; Grp +11; Atk +19 melee (1d6+4, bite); Full Atk +19 melee (1d6+4, bite); SA attach, blood drain, curse of lycanthropy, death attack, sneak attack +2d6; SQ +1 save against poison, alternate form, animal companion (Medium viper), damage reduction 10/silver, darkvision 60 ft., favored enemies (dwarves +4, fey +2), light sensitivity, low-light vision, poison use, scent, uncanny dodge, weasel empathy, wild empathy +5; AL CE; SV Fort +11, Ref +21, Will +9; Str 15, Dex 28, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 8.

**Skills and Feats:** Climb +11, Craft (trapmaking) +2, Disguise +6, Hide +23, Listen +9, Move Silently +23, Search +2, Spot +9, Survival +8; Alertness, Endurance, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Stealthy, Track, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (dagger).

**Attach (Ex):** If Lidae hits with a bite attack, she latches onto the opponent's body and automatically deals bite damage each round she remains attached. She loses her Dexterity bonus to Armor Class and has an AC of 17. While attached, she can be struck with a weapon or grappled. To remove her through grappling, the opponent must achieve a pin against her.

**Blood Drain (Ex):** Lidae deals 1d4 points of Constitution damage from blood drain each round she remains attached.

**Curse of Lycanthropy (Su):** Any humanoid or giant hit by Lidae's bite attack must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or contract lycanthropy.

**Death Attack:** After studying her target for 3 rounds, Lidae can either kill it or paralyze it for 1d6+3 rounds with a successful melee sneak attack (Fort DC 13 negates).

**Alternate Form (Su):** Lidae can assume the form of a kobold, a dire weasel, or a hybrid of the two.

**Animal Companion:** Lidae has a Medium viper as her animal companion. This creature grants her the following benefits.

**Link (Ex):** Lidae can handle her animal companion as a free action or push it as a move action, even if she doesn't have any ranks in the Handle Animal skill. She gains a +4 circumstance bonus on all wild empathy checks and Handle Animal checks made regarding her animal companion.

**Share Spells (Ex):** Lidae may have any spell she casts on herself also affect her animal companion if the latter is within 5 feet at the time of casting. She may also cast a spell with a target of "You" on her companion.

**Favored Enemies:** Lidae has selected dwarves and fey as favored enemies. She gains a +4 and a +2 bonus, respectively, on her Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, and Survival checks when using these skills against these types of creatures. She gets the same bonus on weapon damage rolls against creatures of these types.

**Light Sensitivity (Ex):** Lidae is dazzled in bright sunlight or within the radius of a *daylight* spell.

**Poison Use:** Lidae is trained in the use of poisons and never risks accidentally poisoning herself when applying poison to a blade.

**Uncanny Dodge (Ex):** Lidae can react to danger before her senses would normally allow her to even be aware of it. She retains her Dexterity bonus to AC (if any) regardless of being caught flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker. (She still loses any Dexterity bonus to AC if immobilized.)

**Weasel Empathy (Ex):** Lidae gains a +4 racial bonus on checks made to influence the attitude of weasels or dire weasels. She can also communicate simple concepts and (if the animal is friendly) commands.

**Wild Empathy (Ex):** Lidae can use body language, vocalizations, and demeanor to improve the attitude of an animal. This ability functions just like a Diplomacy check to improve the attitude of a person. Her bonus on the check is +5. The typical domestic animal has a starting attitude of indifferent, while wild animals are usually unfriendly. Lidae and the animal must study each other for 1 minute. This ability can also be used to influence a magical beast with an Intelligence score of 1 or 2, but Lidae takes a -4 penalty on the check.

**Possessions:** 3 +2 daggers, bracers of armor +2, amulet of mighty fists +1, gloves of Dexterity +2, cloak of resistance +2, 2 potions of cure serious wounds.

**Lidae (Hybrid Form):** Female kobold dire wereweasel ranger 5/assassin 3; CR 11; Medium humanoid (reptilian, shapechanger); HD 3d8+3 plus 5d8+5 plus 3d6+3; hp 57; Init +13; Spd 30 ft.; AC 26, touch 19, flat-footed 17; Base Atk +9; Grp +11; Atk +19 melee (1d6+4, claw) or +19 melee (1d3+4/19-20, +2 dagger) or +19 ranged (1d3+4/19-20, +2 dagger); Full Atk +19 melee (1d6+4, 2 claws) and +14 melee (1d4+2, bite) or +19/+14 melee (1d3+4/19-20, +2 dagger) and +19 melee (1d3+3/19-20, +2 dagger) or +19 ranged (1d3+4/19-20, +2 dagger) and +19 ranged (1d4+3/19-20, +2 dagger); SA attach, blood drain, curse of lycanthropy, death attack, sneak attack +2d6; SQ +1 save against poison, alternate form, animal companion (Medium viper), damage reduction 10/silver, darkvision 60 ft., favored enemies (dwarves +4, fey +2), light sensitivity, low-light vision, poison use, scent, uncanny dodge, weasel empathy, wild empathy +5; AL CE; SV Fort +11, Ref +21, Will +9; Str 15, Dex 28, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 8.

**Skills and Feats:** Climb +11, Craft (trapmaking) +2, Disguise +6, Hide +23, Listen +9, Move Silently +23, Search +2, Spot +9, Survival +8; Alertness, Dodge, Endurance, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Stealthy, Track, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (dagger).

**Attach (Ex):** If Lidae hits with a bite attack, she latches onto the opponent's body and automatically deals bite damage each round she remains attached. She loses her Dexterity bonus to Armor Class and has an AC of 17. While attached, she can be struck with a weapon or grappled. To remove her through grappling, the opponent must achieve a pin against her.

**Blood Drain (Ex):** Lidae deals 1d4 points of Constitution damage from blood drain each round she remains attached.

**Curse of Lycanthropy (Su):** Any humanoid or giant hit by Lidae's bite attack must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or contract lycanthropy.

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with a successful melee sneak attack (Fort DC 13 negates).

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**Favored Enemies:** Lidae has selected dwarves and fey as favored enemies. She gains a +4 and a +2 bonus, respectively, on her Bluff, Listen, Sense Motive, Spot, and Survival checks when using these skills against these types of creatures. She gets the same bonus on weapon damage rolls against creatures of these types.

**Light Sensitivity (Ex):** Lidae is dazzled in bright sunlight or within the radius of a *daylight* spell.

**Poison Use:** Lidae is trained in the use of poisons and never risks accidentally poisoning herself when applying poison to a blade.

**Uncanny Dodge (Ex):** Lidae can react to danger before her senses would normally allow her to even be aware of it. She retains her Dexterity bonus to AC (if any) regardless of being caught flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker. (She still loses any Dexterity bonus to AC if immobilized.)

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**Possessions:** 3 +2 daggers, bracers of armor +2, amulet of mighty fists +1, gloves of Dexterity +2, cloak of resistance +2, 2 potions of cure serious wounds.

**Lidae's Animal Companion:** Female medium viper; CR --; Medium animal; HD 2d8; hp 9; Init +3; Spd 20 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.; AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +1; Grp +0; Atk +4 melee (1d4-1, bite); Full Atk +4 melee (1d4-1, bite); SA poison; SQ bonus trick, low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +1; Str 8, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2.

**Skills and Feats:** Balance +11, Climb +11, Hide +12, Listen +5, Spot +5, Swim +7; Weapon Finesse.



**Poison (Ex):** Bite, Fortitude DC 11, initial damage 1d6 Con, secondary damage 1d6 Con. The save DC is Constitution-based.

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## About the Author

By day, Andy Collins works as a senior designer in the Roleplaying R&D department at Wizards of the Coast, Inc. His credits include the *Player's Handbook* v.3.5, the *Epic Level Handbook*, and the upcoming *Draconomicon*. By night, however, he fights crime as a masked vigilante. Or maybe not.

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